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EURL activities in 2011

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The duties of the EURL are described in Council [Directive 2006/88/EC](#) (Annex VI). The duties mainly concern fish diseases listed as exotic diseases: EHN and EUS; and fish diseases listed as non-exotic diseases: ISA, VHS, IHN, and KHV disease.

Activity report

The 15th Annual Meeting of the National Reference Laboratories for Fish Diseases was held 26-27 May 2011, in Aarhus, Denmark. A total of 52 participants from 33 countries attended over the two day period. There were four sessions with a total of 33 presentations, 9 of which were given by invited speakers. The meeting was held at rented nearby facilities (Søauditoriet) of Aarhus University, as the premises at our institute in Aarhus are too small for the number of participants. A report was submitted in August 2011.

In 2011 we were granted financial support to hold a *workshop in Surveillance and Epidemiology of Aquatic Animal Diseases*. The workshop was organised in close collaboration with the OIE Collaborating Centre for Aquatic Epidemiology and Risk Assessment, constituting of scientists from the Norwegian Veterinary Institute. The Norwegian Veterinary Institute took on the responsibility to plan the scientific programme while the EURL focused on the practical arrangements. The EURLs for Molluscs and Crustacean Diseases were involved as well reflecting that the workshop covered all aquatic animals. The workshop was held 23-24 November, 2011 and took place in the auditorium of the National Veterinary Institute in Copenhagen. A total of 50 participants from 25 countries and 5 invited experts attended the workshop.

Again this year an *inter-laboratory proficiency test* was distributed to the NRLs mainly within the EU but there were also participants from countries outside EU. See following report.

An important focus of the EURL is *to update the standard operating procedures of the non-exotic and exotic listed diseases*. Diagnostic manuals for VHS, IHN, ISA, KHV and EHN are now available at the EURL web page. Diagnostic manual for EUS is under preparation and will be included within long. Unfortunately the manual on sampling and diagnostic procedures for the listed diseases has still not been adapted by the EU, the diagnostic methods therefore still relies on the former Commission Decision 2001/183/EC for VHS and IHN and 2003/446/EC for ISA while no legislative text exist for KHV, EHN and EUS. Significant resources were given to the implementation of diagnostic methods for EUS which soon will be in place and updated on our website.

Another important focus area was the *development, implementation and validation of diagnostic tools for identification of the listed diseases and their accreditation*. One outcome of these efforts was the publication on the generation of a real-time RT-PCR assay for detection of all genotypes of VHSV that has been proposed for the OIE to be used as an alternative to surveillance for VHS by cell cultivation!

During 2011, resources were also used to *collate data on surveillance, health categorisation, and diagnostics in EU; to identify and characterise selected virus isolates; to type, store and update a library of listed virus isolates; to develop, update and maintain the database containing information on fish pathogens (www.fishpathogens.eu); to supply reference materials to NRLs; to provide annual training courses in laboratory diagnosis and missions to other NRLs; to produce antisera; to prepare SOPs for detection of EUS; to update the EURL webpage (www.eurl-fish.eu); and finally to attend international meetings and conferences*.

The permanent staffs of the Section for Fish Diseases in Aarhus, Denmark consists of approx. 22 academic and technical staff, primarily involved in research, diagnostics and consultancy with special focus on fish virology.

Unfortunately the activities of the EURL were affected in early spring 2011 by the information from the DTU vice-chancellor announcing the movement of our institute facilities in Aarhus to the Copenhagen area in 2012. For this reason our valued coordinator of the EURL Dr. Søren Kahns got another position and left our group 31 December 2011. Our future situation is still unsettled and decisions on the frame and placement of the continued work will be taken spring/summer 2012. We sincerely hope the continuation of this important function will be made possible in our future premises.